

The

APRIL 2021

Woodlands

COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE WOODLANDS TOWNSHIP



**Make
Room for
Emergency
Vehicles**

**The Woodlands
WATERWAY
ARTS FESTIVAL**

**Rediscover,
Reconnect and
Recharge
in The Woodlands**

**The Woodlands
NAMED BEST
IN AMERICA**

**FRAUD
ALERT**



How would this child get the critical help she needs... if Children's Safe Harbor didn't exist?

April is National Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month. Over the past several years, Children's Safe Harbor has shared with our community the programs, service statistics and protocols that are the core of our multidisciplinary team approach to providing justice and restoration for our children and families. As a nationally accredited children's advocacy center, Children's Safe Harbor provides specialized services to child victims and their non-offending family members in response to trauma from sexual assault, physical abuse, child sex trafficking and exploitation, neglect, and witnessing violence.

On our centralized campus facility, Children's Safe Harbor co-houses representatives from local law enforcement, prosecution, and the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) caseworkers and the staff of our children's advocacy center. These teams are a specialized unit brought together to focus on the rising increase, and complexity of sexual assault and violence to our children, ages 2 through 17. Since we opened our doors on August 31, 1998 we have provided a safe place for over **19,956** children to be heard, helped and healed.

Our Mission: To achieve justice and healing for every abused child and engage our community in that mission.

Our Vision: Engaging our community to prevent child abuse and achieve justice and healing for every abused child.

Current Climate

While our numbers of service continue to increase on an annual basis, on average by 18%, the coronavirus pandemic has significantly impacted the types of cases that are referred to our children's advocacy center, namely, we are seeing an increase in violence and complexity across all cases. As we

move forward in 2021, still navigating unprecedented demands of a pandemic and the consequences of public health initiatives, unemployment, and ongoing ambiguity and uncertainty, we know increasingly the importance of our work on behalf of our children. **Not all homes are safe.** Not all children are blessed by parents and caregivers who can demonstrate a model of love and compassion for them and their siblings. We all need to open our hearts and minds to be that voice for all of our children.

As good stewards of our financial resources, the executive team of Children's Safe Harbor was asked to consider a business plan that forecasted most likely scenarios for funding, and a worst case scenario. The worst case scenario leaves great gaps in our services and has created return to the days when our children's advocacy center didn't exist; where children do not have a centralized and child-focused space to tell their experiences of abuse and be offered healing all in one facility. Our children and families would again be moving between criminal and civil justice systems without our expert advocacy and guidance. Our families would be alone on the journey of healing and justice...

The pandemic has negatively impacted donations and funding streams for nonprofits across the nation. As Children's Safe Harbor was deemed an essential business, alongside law enforcement and DFPS in Montgomery County, we have had to navigate ever more complicated and violent cases without the certainty of secure and future funding from our federal, state and local grant income streams.

If you see something disturbing happening to a child, please call 911 or the Texas Child Abuse Hotline (800) 252-5400. By sharing your



concerns, you are activating the system of protection for our children.

We all share space as part of the safety net for our children and the hopefulness of their futures and the futures of our community. Children's Safe Harbor hopes to remain a central cog in the wheel of justice and restoration for children and families for decades to come, but we need continued financial support.

In recognition of the month of April as "Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month", please consider a donation to Children's Safe Harbor by visiting www.childrendefense.org.

